

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 28, 2009

Third Member of Bank Robbery Gang Sentenced to 40 Years in Federal Prison

– FBI Agent Tragically Killed During Last Attempted Robbery –

(More)

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TRENTON – A third member of a bank robbery gang whose spree included an attempted robbery during which an FBI Special Agent was tragically killed was sentenced today to 481 months in federal prison, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

U.S. District Judge Anne E. Thompson also ordered Efrain Lynn, 23, to pay \$80,836 in restitution to the banks he and the other members of the gang robbed between February and March 2007.

The sentencing of Lynn follows the sentencing on May 11 of the robbery gang leader, Francisco Herrera-Genao, 24, to 117 years in prison, and the sentencing last week of Wilfredo Berrios, aka “Robo Cop,” to 85 years. There is no parole in the federal system. The final defendant involved in the bank robbery crew, Michael Cruz, pleaded guilty in January 2008 to the attempted robbery in Readington and another armed robbery preceding it. Cruz’s sentencing is scheduled for June 8.

Lynn was not present at the PNC bank in Readington on April 5, 2007, when the FBI interrupted that attempted robbery. During the arrests, Special Agent Barry Lee Bush was shot and killed by the accidental discharge of another agent’s weapon. Lynn was arrested later the same day in New Brunswick.

“This is another appropriately long prison sentence that reflects the seriousness of the crimes Lynn and the others committed,” said Marra.

“We hope the sentencings in this case send a crystal clear message to those who would choose to commit bank robbery rather than obtain money through honorable means,” said Weysan Dun, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Newark.

On Dec. 10, a jury convicted Berrios, Herrera-Genao and Lynn, all of New Brunswick, for the string of armed bank robberies in central New Jersey.

All of the defendants had been suspected in the robberies. Berrios, Herrera-Genao and Cruz were being shadowed by an FBI task force which closed in on them outside the PNC Bank branch on Route 22 in Readington. It was during the arrest of Cruz in a car nearby the bank, that Special Agent Bush was shot.

Berrios was arrested at the PNC Bank in a car which held a .380 handgun, an SKS assault rifle and an MDL assault rifle, all of which had been used by the crew in prior bank robberies. Herrera-Genao fled on foot from the car, and was arrested the next day.

In each of the bank robberies, the heavily armed suspects entered the banks and, in three cases, discharged weapons to intimidate employees and patrons and take control of the

scene. In one case, a bullet that ricocheted off the ceiling grazed a customer's leg. In another instance, a fired bullet ricocheted into teller glass, shattered the glass and caused a bank employee to be struck in the face with glass and bullet fragments.

The case has been prosecuted by Charles B. McKenna, Chief of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division, and by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacob T. Elberg.

Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI, as well as the numerous other local police departments, including Piscataway, East Brunswick, New Brunswick, Ocean Township, South Brunswick, Readington and the State Police, as well as the Monmouth, Somerset and Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, all of whom comprised the task force charged with ending the gang's serial bank robbery spree.

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Defense counsel:

For Lynn – David Oakley, Esq., Princeton

For Berrios – John Furlong, Esq., West Trenton

For Herrera-Genao – Martin Matlaga, Esq., New Brunswick

For Cruz – Michael Pedicini, Esq., Morristown